

# Montgomery County, Maryland Department of Health and Human Services



## VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD



## ANNUAL REPORT

**1999 - 2000**

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November 27, 2000

The Honorable Douglas M. Duncan  
Montgomery County Executive

The Honorable Blair Ewing  
President, Montgomery County Council

Dear Messrs. Duncan and Ewing:

It is an honor to serve the people of Montgomery County as the co-chair of the Victim Services Advisory Board (VSAB). I am a long-time resident of Gaithersburg, a wife and a mother. I am also a registered nurse and have worked at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital for the past 21 years. The victims of violent crime need a strong voice that understands their needs. The VSAB attempts to make corrections in services when we see that it is necessary, by assessing needs, providing support to victims and line staff, by lobbying for changes in legislation, by considering budget needs, and most importantly by education and outreach.

I got involved in this work three years ago after serving as the editor of the "Wings of Hope" newsletter for homicide victims. I know what it feels like to have one's family victimized by violent crime. I have walked in their shoes. Victims of crime and their family members who are further along in our healing must give back to our community so that crime victims' voices are heard. The VSAB gives me that opportunity.

Kay Cummins, R.N.  
Co-Chair

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1999 - 2000

**VOTING MEMBERS**

**KAY CUMMINS, R.N. (Co-Chair)**  
**WILLIAM H. HENRY, ESQ. (Co-Chair)**

**AT LARGE**

**Judith P. Aboud**  
**David T. Bachrach**  
**Marcie Deitch**  
**Deborah Ehrenstein**  
**Carl D. Hamstead**  
**Pat Lupson**  
  
**Linda G. Meyer**  
**Carol A. Weiss**

**PROFESSIONAL**

**Sheila Footer**  
**Arnold Gordon**  
**Anne Hopewell**

**CLERGY**

**Rev. Kathleen Bauerle-  
Berg**

**Currently two vacancies**

1999 - 2000

**Ex-Officio Members**

**Nadja S.P. Cabello, Director, Victim As-  
sistance and Sexual Assault Program**

**State's Attorney's Office: Ethel Burnett**

**Police Department : Ann Miller**

**Office of the Public Defender: vacant**

**Guests**

**Corinne Stevens, Chief**

**Crisis, Income & Victim Services**

**Maria Sivillo, Confidential Aide to**

**Councilman Phil Andrews' Office**

**Warren Lupson**

**MEMBERSHIP**

***EMPOWERING,  
SUPPORTING  
AND  
ADVOCATING  
FOR CRIME  
VICTIMS***

Membership includes 18 voting members who are residents of Montgomery County and four non-voting members. The voting members consist of five citizens from among the mental health, legal, medical, dental and nursing professions; ten citizens at-large who do not belong to any of the professions mentioned above; one member of the clergy; and representatives designated by the Alcoholism and Other Drug Abuse

Advisory Council and the Mental Health Advisory Committee.

Four non-voting ex-officio members shall be the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services and representatives from the State's Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, and the Department of Police.

**PURPOSE**

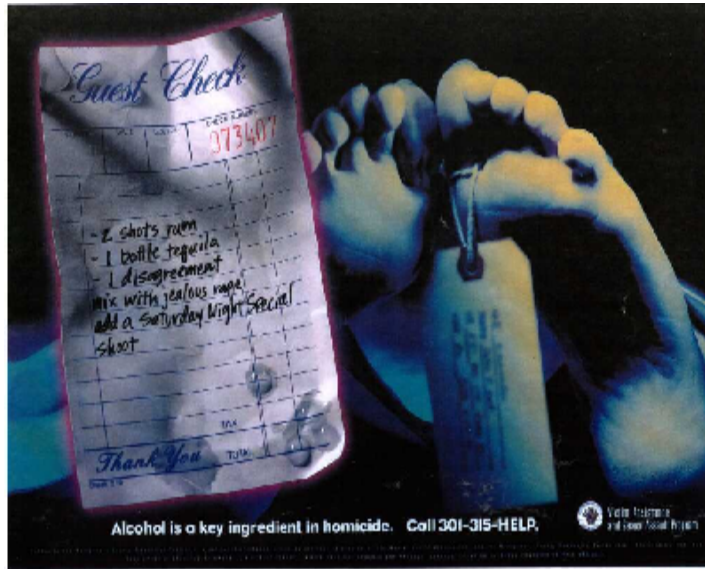
The Board must periodically review available services and facilities for victims and their families; determine needs of the victim and family services program; submit at least one report annually to the County Executive and the County Council on the progress of programs to victims and their families and of actions needed to improve those programs; makes recommendations for appropriate allocation of funds in accordance with agreed upon priorities and consideration of financial resources. The Board also assists the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services in the development of the annual victim services and families plan and acts as a local advocate for victim services programming.

Montgomery County Code—Art. VII, Section 24-56. Bill 7-95.

**MISSION**

**TO SUPPORT MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S COMMITMENT TO SERVE VICTIMS OF CRIME, INCLUDING RAPE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, HOMICIDE SURVIVORS, ADULTS MOLESTED AS CHILDREN AND OTHER CRIMES.**

## **“ALCOHOL IS A KEY INGREDIENT IN VIOLENCE” CAMPAIGN**



Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan, State's Attorney Bob Dean and Councilwoman Gail Ewing, joined the Victim Services Advisory Board, the Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program, and other community groups in launching a public service advertising campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the role that alcohol plays in violence. The event was held at the Rockville Metro Station on April 9, 1998 where Mr. Duncan thanked Metro officials for their role in displaying diorama-size advertising posters at its transit stations in Montgomery County.

Posters (as illustrated) have been approved by Montgomery County Public School's Health Education Office and were distributed to all health educators and nurses at MCPS. Posters created by Earle, Palmer, and Brown Advertising firm, pro-bono.

### ***Monthly board meetings***

The Victim Services Advisory Board generally meets every fourth Thursday evening, (except August) 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. each month. Meetings are held at: Montgomery County, Department of Health and Human Services, 1301 Piccard Drive, 4th Floor Conference Room, Rockville, Maryland. Meetings are open to the general public.

### ***HIGHLIGHTS 1999-2000***

- ♦ **Advocated study/investigation to improve outreach police protocol regarding crime victims**
- ♦ **Provided personal testimonies at the state and county level to impact legislative changes**
- ♦ **Supported other victim services organizations (e.g. Stephanie Roper Foundation)**
- ♦ **Advocated funding for victims' programs and services in Montgomery County**
- ♦ **Supported feasibility study on child care for 1301 and 1335 Piccard Buildings**
- ♦ **Created and printed first brochure for Victim Services Advisory Board**
- ♦ **Advocated and funding approved by County Executive and County Council for:**
  - One bilingual therapist and half-time victim assistant; \$500 transportation fund for VASAP victims of crime; \$3,000 for APP's Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic Violence; \$65,000 for the Betty Ann Krahnke Domestic Violence Shelter .**

## ***SUBCOMMITTEES***

Subcommittees were recently developed in an attempt to utilize all of our Board members in a more direct role. Each member is asked to participate in two subcommittees. Some of these groups are very active year round, others have busy seasons.

### ***EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE***

Co-chairs, director of VASAP and other members of the Board involved in the budget process.

### ***PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE***

3-4 members who volunteer their time and energy to make contacts with other persons, groups and organizations, and to fashion creative solutions to issues involving crime victims.

### ***ORGANIZATIONAL AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE***

3-4 members provide support behind the scenes: phoning members, attending other meetings, taking notes on those meetings and reporting back to the entire group.

### ***LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE***

Several members, at least one of whom is an attorney, interested in research, fact gathering, law research and testimony preparation.

### ***MEMBERSHIP***

### ***AND RECRUITMENT:***

Several members interested in actively searching for appropriate candidates to fill vacancies on the board as they arise.

***PURPOSE:*** Meets with the

staff of VASAP and APP to prioritize the needs of the program for the coming year. Lobbies for financial support from the Department Director, the Division Chief, the County Executive and the County Council. Prepares an annual report for the Executive each fall. Testifies as required.

***PURPOSE:*** Provides educational outreach to the community in programs such as the mall project, multimedia networking, letter writing to local newspapers, places posters in public buildings, and conducts public relations.

***PURPOSE:*** Places phone calls to board members to remind them of any upcoming meetings or events, reports on the Executive Task Force on Domestic Violence meetings, reports on the Mental Health Advisory meetings, organizes the monthly meetings, etc.

***PURPOSE:*** Investigates issues concerning victims that may require legislation, maintains contact with the Stephanie Roper Committee (and other victims' rights organizations), reports on matters of mutual interest, researches County and State issues, prepares witnesses to testify on legislative matters, and prepares bills for possible recommendations (with supporting material).

***PURPOSE:*** Meets with other members to discuss the needs of the board, interviews prospective members, passes recommendations onto the County Executive for approval, seeks ways to increase minority candidates, works with existing members.

2001

*PRIORITIES***EARLY  
INTERVENTION**

A change in the latest protocol by the County Police, Major Crimes Division, to exclude the Sexual Assault Outreach volunteer from being included as part of the Sexual Assault Assistance Team. Since early intervention is best, we believe volunteers must be included immediately in the process, as the County regulation requires.

**PUBLIC  
RELATIONS**

Campaign to focus on more media coverage. Putting together a presentation for television to highlight the work of VSAB; "Alcohol is a Key Ingredient in Violence" campaign.

**EDUCATION AND  
OUTREACH**

Additional outreach to young people in community schools; education of the community on Victim Services available and how they can be accessed.

**LEGISLATION**

Support for the National Victim's Rights Amendment; joining forces with the Stephanie Roper Committee to back legislation efforts for Victims of Crime; support research and develop Ex-Parte Order legislation in the State of Maryland; work on educating judges that serve the community so they understand the need to impose appropriate sentences and to enforce the fees to support the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB); attempt to renew the legislative push for better enforcement and improvement of the CICB to make it more victim-friendly.

**DIVERSITY**

Attract new minority members from diverse cultural backgrounds interested and knowledgeable on victims of crime issues.

**BUDGET  
TESTIMONIES**

After interviewing VASAP and APP line staff in September to assess the biggest needs for their programs, Board will focus on three budget items for each program. Testimonies will be presented to the Health and Human Services Budget Forum in October; the County Executive in the Fall/Winter, and the County Council in April.

**ONGOING  
ACTIVITIES**

Work with other HHS' Committees and Commissions by attending meetings and working toward common goals; Prepare Annual Report.

# IN RETROSPECT

## WHY DO WE HAVE A VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD?

1. To review available services for crime victims and their families and to determine any deficits in services or to identify new needs;
2. To submit an annual report to the County Executive and the County Council on victim programs and to make suggestions for improving these services;
3. To assess budget needs to keep the victim programs running efficiently and to make recommendations for allocations of County funds in accordance with agreed upon priorities;
4. To meet regularly with Director of the Department of Health and Human Services in assisting with the development of an annual plan for providing continued victim services;
5. To lobby as needed before the County Council to improve laws within our County for the better treatment of victims;
6. To lobby as needed before the State legislature to improve laws within our State for the better treatment of victims; and
7. To act as an advocate of victim services.

### Advocating Yearly for the Budget:

- ◆ The Budget Subcommittee met with the line staff of the Abused Persons Program and Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program to allow them an opportunity to communicate the needs of each of their programs
- ◆ Members met with Ms. Corinne Stevens, Chief of Crisis Income and Victim Services to express budget concerns and requests
- ◆ Attended and testified at the HHS Budget Forum to Mr. Chuck Short and all senior managers
- ◆ Participated in the annual meeting with County Executive Douglas Duncan to highlight accomplishments, discussed issues that need advocacy and made requests for the annual budget
- ◆ Visited individual Council Members and their aides to express concerns for County Victim programs highlighting funding needs for the upcoming fiscal year
- ◆ Supported and advocated for security improvements to County buildings
- ◆ Testified before the County Council on the budget needs of Victim Services Programs

### Advocating for Legislation on behalf of Crime Victims:

- ◆ Wrote letters of support and attended rallies in support of the National Victims' Rights Amendment on the Federal level
- ◆ Supported the States' Attorneys' commitment to the issue of allowing drivers involved in fatal accidents to be charged with negligent homicide
- ◆ Made supportive telephone calls to Delegates and Senators in Annapolis in support of negligent homicide legislation
- ◆ Corresponded with members of the County Council and State legislators concerning various victims' issues including Councilman Blair G. Ewing, Senator Barbara A. Mikulski, and Representative Paul S. Sarbanes
- ◆ Advocated for passage of Violence Against Women Act II at the federal level through phone calls to Senator Connie Morella's office





# IN RETROSPECT

## Advocating for Legislation on behalf of Crime Victims:

- ◆ Joined forces with the Stephanie Roper Committee to focus on victims' legislative needs
- ◆ Identified needed changes in the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board specifically including immediate family members of victims for limited compensation, including victims of vehicular accidents victimized during the commission of a crime, removing the financial hardship clause so that all victims of crime can be eligible, and to increase the compensation limits within the State of Maryland
- ◆ Prepared a list of witnesses and assisted them with the preparation of their testimony in front of the legislators in Annapolis
- ◆ Traveled to Annapolis and testified before the House and the Senate on behalf of victim-friendly bills

## Ensuring a Montgomery County System that is Victim-Friendly:

- ◆ Corresponded and met with Chief Charles Moose to discuss concerns for a recent change in police protocol at the Major Crimes division to ensure that sexual assault outreach volunteers are included in all reported cases of rape and sexual assault as part of the Sexual Assault Assistance Team as mandated by Executive Regulation
- ◆ Showed support and reaction to Judicial decisions via correspondence, phone calls, and interviews concerning Judicial remarks made in the case of a 13-year-old rape victim
- ◆ Met with Mr. McCarthy at the States' Attorney's Office to ensure that new streamlined procedures for citizen complaints were victim friendly and would not deter victims from reporting
- ◆ Hosted Ms. Karen Orlansky and Ms. Sue Richards from the Office of Legislative Oversight to review the Council's study and recommendations for a comprehensive Domestic Violence response including the necessity for *Ex-Parte Orders* to be available for victims during non-business hours

## Educating Ourselves and the Community on Victim Related Issues:

- ◆ Hosted the first regional training on the State Criminal Injuries Compensation Board
- ◆ Hosted Clinical Supervisor, Ms. Patricia Unger of VASAP concerning the training of VASAP outreach volunteers
- ◆ Met with chairs of the remaining 11 Boards for HHS at the Quarterly Leadership Advisory Council hosted by Mr. Chuck Short, Director for HHS
- ◆ Sent VSAB board representation to regularly attend meetings of the Executive Task Force on Domestic Violence and the Mental Health Advisory Committee, on occasion attended the Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Council
- ◆ Collaborated in the recent Alcohol Licensing Town Meeting with powerful testimonies given by VSAB Board members and past VSAB co-chair on the link between Alcohol and Violence, the VSAB posters "Alcohol is a Key Ingredient in Violence" were available at the town meeting for distribution
- ◆ Hosted Ms. Maude Clarke concerning the training and education of religious leaders in our community on domestic violence issues
- ◆ Attended the State Victims' Rights Week annual memorial event
- ◆ Hosted Ms. Bobbi Walton, Confidential Aide to Montgomery County Councilman Phil Andrew on the County's budget process and how to be effective in lobbying efforts



*These recommendations were presented to HHS Budget Forum and the Victim Services Advisory Board supports the following budget recommendations for FY '02:*

**Recommendation #1:**

Provide **\$20,000** to VASAP to increase **Community Education** at schools and an additional **\$20,000** for **Public Relations/Education** to the public.

**Recommendation #2:**

Provide **\$40,000** to APP's **Linkages to Learning** project in order to provide workshops on domestic violence to two schools. The Community Review Panel supports this effort.

**Recommendation #3:**

Restore the **Principal Administrative Aide** at VASAP. The restoration of this position would help administrative staff in the VASAP program. A current grant that helps pay for front office staff will terminate in 6/30/01.

**Recommendation #4:**

Create a full-time **Program Manager** position to assist both the Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program (VASAP) and the Abused Persons Program (APP). This position has been recommended by the Community Review Panel. It will provide mid-level management to both programs thereby reducing liability of at-risk services and maintaining high standards of care to victims.

**Recommendation #5:**

Provide **\$8,000** to VASAP for costs associated with the **data collection and reporting data** on a quarterly basis to ensure accurate outcome measures.

**Recommendation #6:**

Provide VASAP with a **laptop computer** to be used for educational outreach presentations, training and meetings for the Victim Services Advisory Board. Cost is approximately **\$2,500**.

**Recommendation #7:**

Provide VASAP with a **Flexible Fund** of **\$2,500** to augment their transportation fund. This discretionary fund will be used to help crime victims and their immediate families with transportation to and from Court related proceedings and help the neediest to purchase lunch when necessary while at the Courthouse.

**Recommendation #8:**

Provide **\$3,000** to APP's **Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic Violence** for mailing, printing, library and training costs.

*The Board members strongly urge the County Executive and County Council to seriously consider these recommendations.*



# *E F F E C T I V E N E S S*

## **Support from Senator**

Dear Friends at the Victim Services Advisory Board:

“I appreciate knowing of your support for the proposed Victims’ Rights Constitutional Amendment. Crime is a constant worry in our commu-

nities. Reform of our criminal justice system is needed to ensure that victims of felony crimes know that those guilty of these crimes receive swift punishment. It is important for our society that the vic-

tims of crime believe that the criminal justice system does work in their best interests.”

**Barbara A. Mikulski**  
**United States Senator**

February 23, 2000

## **Recommendations Considered by County Council**

“Thank you for your earlier visit, your testimony and your follow up letter. The information you have supplied is helpful. We will give careful consideration to your

recommendation. I am a firm believer that education makes a difference and public service announcements are still another way to educate the public as to what

the County can offer.”

**Blair G. Ewing**  
**Councilmember**  
**At-Large**

April 25, 2000

## **Changes Implemented by Judge**

“I was very interested in what you had to say and the information has changed my approach to court costs. I am now

imposing court costs in a vast majority of cases.

**Judge Paul A. McGuckian**

July 20, 1999

## MEET THE MEMBERS OF THE VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

*We are pleased to introduce all of our current members who volunteer their time, special talents and skills to help improve victims' rights and services in Montgomery County, Maryland.*



**"One thing I have learned in life is that one's character is measured by one's ability to overcome obstacles and to make the best of an unpleasant situation."**

### **William H. Henry, Esq.**

William H. Henry, Esq., has run his own law practice since 1995. He has been a victim advocate since 1996 when he was carjacked, shot and left for dead. Mr. Henry is a 1999 recipient of the Maryland State Governor's Award for Victim Rights and Service, a member of Who's Who in America, and is current Co-Chairperson of the Board (serving his second term).

### **Kay Cummins, R.N.**

Ms. Cummins is a registered nurse and has worked at the Shady Grove Adventist Hospital for the past 21 years. She is the Co-chairperson of the Board and is serving her second term.

**"Victims of crime and their family members who are further along in their healing must give back to their communities so that crime victims' voices are heard."**

### **Judith P. Aboud**

Ms. Aboud worked for the American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists for 14 years and served as a Program Administrator. During the past 5 ½ years she has served as an outreach volunteer for the Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program of Montgomery County and was awarded the George Sullivan Memorial Award as the outstanding volunteer for 1997.

### **David T. Bachrach, M.A. Criminology & Criminal Justice**

Mr. Bachrach is employed by the U.S. Department of Justice to monitor Police Department compliance with the terms and conditions of federal grants. He also instructed students in criminal justice ethics and criminology theory. As a new member, Mr. Bachrach seeks to make diverse communities safer for all citizens.

### **Kathleen Bauerle-Berg, Master of Divinity**

Rev. Bauerle-Berg is currently the Pastor of the Church of the Beloved, and therapist for Interfaith Counseling Services. Rev. Bauerle-Berg offers a clergy's perspective especially in the area of sexual abuse and violence as a result of her experience in therapeutic situations involving people who have been victimized.

### **Marcie Deitch, B.A. in Psychology**

Ms. Deitch has worked for the Gaithersburg Police Department as a bilingual (Spanish/ English) victim advocate since 1995. As the youngest member of the Board, Ms. Deitch brings a high level of energy, insight, and desire to help victims of crime.

### **Deborah Ehrenstein, LCSW-C**

Ms. Ehrenstein is a licensed social worker who formerly worked for the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Jewish Social Service Agency and Sheltering Arms Children's Service. Recently retired, Ms. Ehrenstein contributes her experience and skills in the area of child protection.

**Sheila Footer, Esq.**

Ms. Footer currently works as a legal recruiter for Frey & Sher Associates, Inc. For 10 years she worked as a trial lawyer specializing in business litigation and criminal defense and also worked as an Assistant State's Attorney for Montgomery County. She believes victims need support in the court system and that advocacy and victims' rights can help turn their lives around.

**Arnold B. Gordon, Esq.**

Mr. Gordon is currently the Director of Barents Group/KPMG Peat Marwick and is responsible for all tax administration personnel in all projects of the firm throughout the world. Mr. Gordon has been a successful businessman and Maryland resident for 22 years and wants to give back to the community by helping to improve services for victims in Montgomery County.

**Carl D. Hamstead, B.A. in Criminology**

Mr. Hamstead is a Community Release Coordinator with Montgomery County's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. He has received special military training and education in the U.S. Army in addition to his academic training. Mr. Hamstead has played an active role for victims by providing testimonies on behalf of the Board to state and county legislators.

**Anne Hopewell, M.S.W. Planning & Administration**

Ms. Hopewell is currently a Senior Associate at Health Systems Research where she manages grants to provide health care and quality child care to low income children. She was formerly the Executive Director of the United Way of Virginia. Although new to the Montgomery County area, Ms. Hopewell has extensive volunteer and professional experience in victim advocacy especially in the area of domestic violence.

**Patricia Lupson**

Mrs. Lupson, together with her husband Warren Lupson, visit prisoners and speak about their daughter, Gina Marie (26) and their grandchildren Shaun Edward (3) and Joshua Lee (seven months), who were slain in an arson fire set by their son-in-law on June 9, 1993. A guilty verdict with three consecutive life sentences was returned against the perpetrator in October, 1995.

"I can't go back and make things right. I can't change the past, but I can make a new beginning. If just one prisoner leaves prison and doesn't raise his hand again, or pick up a gun, then I've done honor to my kid's memory."

**Linda G. Meyer, M.A. in Special Education**

Ms. Meyer has a Bachelors degree in Social Work and a Masters degree in Special Education. For the past eight years she has worked as a Special Education Early Childhood teacher with Montgomery County's Infants and Toddlers Program of HHS.

**Carol A. Weiss, M.S in Education Adm./Supervision and M.S. in Government/Criminal Justice**

Ms. Weiss is currently the Assistant Principal of Roberto Clemente Middle School and the former Assistant Principal of Ridgeview Middle School. Her employment experience includes working as a Montgomery County school teacher, Security Personnel and Training Supervisor, Director of Security, Criminal Justice Instructor and as a Police Officer of Arlington County. Ms. Weiss also has served as a Commissioner on the Commission For Women as well as a number of other community groups.



Victim Services Advisory Board  
1301 Piccard Drive, Suite 4100  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Language translation and alternative formats of this report as well as the VSAB Brochure are available upon request. For additional information on the Board, please call or write:

Montgomery County Victim Services Advisory Board  
C/O VASAP  
1301 Piccard Drive, Suite 4100  
Rockville, Maryland 20850  
240-777-1355 (Voice)  
240-777-1329 (FAX)  
240-777-1347 (T TY)  
[WWW.VASAP.ORG](http://WWW.VASAP.ORG)

VSAB Staff Support: Nadja S.P. Cabello, Director  
Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program  
Office Support: I. M. Nichols, Victim Assistant



## VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

December 5, 2000

The Honorable Douglas M. Duncan  
Montgomery County Executive

The Honorable Blair Ewing  
President, Montgomery County Council

Dear Messrs. Duncan and Ewing:

The Victim Services Advisory Board has an ambitious agenda for the calendar year 2001. Basically, this agenda can be broken down into six categories: (1) Legislative; (2) Focus Groups/Diversification; (3) Team Work With Other Boards, Commissions and Agencies; (4) Fundraising for the County Victim Compensation Fund; (5) Public Relations; and (6) Crime Prevention Education.

1. **Legislative:** The financial cost of crime is enormous. According to a National Institute of Justice study, at least 10% of mental health care expenditures can be attributed to victims treated as a result of their victimization. Violent crime causes 3% of U.S. medical spending and 14% of injury-related medical spending. Violent crime results in direct wage losses equivalent to at least 1% of total American earnings.

The Victim Services Advisory Board ("VSAB" or "Board") will continue to push for State legislation to make Maryland's Criminal Injuries Compensation Board ("CICB") more victim-friendly; to remove financial eligibility barriers; to provide compensation for counseling costs for immediate family and household members of crime victims; and to expedite the payment of valid claims made by victims and members of their family who have exhausted all other collateral sources for their out-of-pocket victim-related losses.

A second legislative priority of the Board is to make ex-parte orders available to domestic violence victims, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Currently, those orders can only be obtained Monday through Friday, during normal Court business hours.

Another legislative priority of the VSAB is to establish criminal penalties (including incarceration) for sex offenders who fail to register as required by State, local or Federal law. Currently, many such sex offenders can defy their obligation, and thus any penalty whatsoever, by simply failing to report as a sex offender.

2. **Focus Groups/Diversification:** Montgomery County is rich in its multi-cultural diversity. However, a "one size fits all" approach does not work for a number of our crime victims. Factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, and age can influence how best to help particular victims of crime. The VSAB will endeavor to create focus groups in Montgomery County's culturally diverse neighborhoods with the goal of ensuring that the needs of all crime victims are met. The VSAB will reach out to various leaders of our many "cultural communities" to gain trust, build rapport and empower those cultural communities to help themselves. The Board will make it a priority to heighten awareness with respect to some of the barriers of providing culturally competent services to our diverse population of crime victims - by breaking down certain stereotypes and cross cultural communication barriers and by differentiating various cultural values. The VSAB will also actively seek to diversify the make-up of its own Board by recruiting leaders from our various cultural communities.

## VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

3. **Team Work With Other Boards, Commissions and Agencies:** “Two heads are better than one.” With that principle in mind, the VSAB will continue to work together with other County and State Board, Committees and Commissions and with outside victim service providers and other agencies to further our common goal to service the needs of crime victims.

Studies show that alcohol is a factor in at least 40% of all violent crimes. Seventy-five percent of all incidents of spousal abuse involve an offender who has been drinking. Alcohol involvement is the leading factor in motor vehicle deaths. Therefore, the VSAB will continue to work with the Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Board to educate our citizens that alcohol and drugs are key ingredients in violence.

Our Board will also seek to team up with the Commission on Aging to help prevent elder abuse. We will continue to partner with the Stephanie Roper Committee to assist victims of crime. Additionally, the VSAB will press to re-establish a long-standing practice with the Montgomery County Police Department (that was only recently eliminated) that provides for automatic notification to specially trained Outreach Volunteers to assist crime victims at our county’s hospitals, police stations, etc. immediately after the crime has occurred (the duty of the Outreach Volunteers is to provide comfort and support to the victims, to make referrals and to act as liaison with the victim’s family and household members).

4. **Fundraising for the County’s Crime Victim Compensation Fund:** Montgomery County is fortunate to be the only county in Maryland to have its own local crime victim compensation fund. Our Board will develop creative methods to raise funds for that fund, which is quasi-charitable in nature, and which matches every dollar of private contributions with two dollars of county funds.

5. **Public Relations:** Montgomery County’s victim services are light years ahead of those of most jurisdictions. Sadly, however, many of our residents are unaware of the superb victim services that our county provides. We will continue to develop methods to “get the word out” so that we can service as many of our county crime victims (and members of their families) as possible.

6. **Crime Prevention Education:** Our Board’s mission would not be complete if we did not attempt to prevent crime from occurring in the first place. The VSAB will continue to sponsor and assist crime prevention programs in our community. For example, the Board will continue to sponsor the highly successful Lakeforest Mall Crime Prevention program and seek to expand that program to every mall in our county.

It is the pleasure of our Board to strive to fulfill the above agenda, to serve the needs of Montgomery County crime victims and their family members, and to make our county proud.

Sincerely yours,

William H. Henry  
Co-Chairperson, VSAB



